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THE PHANTOM™

#16
MOONSTONE™
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Mike Bullock
Silvestre Szilagyi

THE PHANTOM
created by LEE FALK
"FORGOTTEN"
WRITTEN BY MIKE BULLOCK
ILLUSTRATED BY SILVESTRE SZILAGYI
COLORED BY BOB PEDROZA
LETTERED BY TROY PETERI
EDITED BY JOE GENTILE
COVER BY BRET BLEVINS & TERRY AUSTIN
SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT
ED RHOADES
MOONSTONE is...
Joe Gentile - editor-in-chief
Dave Ulanski - art director
Lori G and Garrett Anderson - editorial
Greg Gass & Mike Reynolds - ground control
Kathleen O'Brien - web master
Joe Gentile & Dave Ulanski - publishers
visit the Moonstone website at
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1856
AN ATTACK BY A JUNGLE WILDCAT LEAVES THE PHANTOM WOUNDED AND ON THE VERGE OF DEATH. CRIMINALS WHO HATE OUR HERO STUMBLE UPON HIS AILING FORM AND DECIDE TO TAKE THEIR REVENGE.
SEEKING TO RID THE WORLD OF THE GHOST WHO WALKS, THESE COMMON THUGS DECIDE TO BURN HIS IMMORTAL SOUL FROM HIS EARTHLY BODY.
FIRE KILLS EVEN GHOSTS.

CARLYLE, THE GREAT WHITE HUNTER LOOKS ON, SHOCKED AND DISMAYED AT THE SCENE PLAYING OUT BEFORE HIS EYES.
I DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS, BUT WE HAVE TO SAVE HIM!
WE THREE, THEY TWENTY. BETTER WE GO BEFORE THEY SEE US!

NOT ON YOUR LIFE! GO AROUND THE OTHER SIDE, WE'LL CREATE THE ILLUSION THERE ARE MORE OF US THAN THERE ARE OF THEM.

BANG
BANG
WE'RE SURROUNDED!
BANG
RUN!
LET'S GET THIS MASK OFF OF HIM AND SEE HOW BADLY--
NO! TO LOOK UPON THE FACE OF THE PHANTOM IS CERTAIN DEATH!
"THE PHANTOM"?
HE IS THE GHOST WHO WALKS, RULER OF THESE JUNGLES.
WE SUMMON BANDAR. THEY TAKE CARE OF PHANTOM.
WHO ARE THE "BANDAR"?
POISON PYGMY PEOPLE. THE GHOST WHO WALKS. A CAVE SHAPED LIKE A SKULL...
AM I DREAMING?

CARLYLE, YOU SAVED MY LIFE. THE BANDAR TOLD ME YOU ROUTED TWENTY KNOWN CRIMINALS TO RESCUE ME.
YOU ARE A BRAVE MAN.
I'VE HEARD SUCH THINGS ABOUT YOU. IF SOMEONE SEES YOUR FACE, THEY'LL WITHER AND DIE. YOU ARE THREE HUNDRED YEARS OLD AND IMMORTAL!
IS THIS TRUE?
ALL YOU'VE HEARD IS TRUE OF THE PHANTOM.
NOW, TAKE THIS MARK-- IT WILL PROTECT YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS.
1956
THE OMGALI HEADHUNTERS HAD SWORN OFF HEADHUNTING IN AN EFFORT TO EMBRACE A MORE PEACEFUL EXISTENCE WITH THEIR NEIGHBORING TRIBES.
HOWEVER, OLD HABITS DIE HARD, AND A FACTION OF AMBITIOUS YOUTH CAPTURE TONY CARLYLE (GREAT GRANDSON OF CARLYLE, THE GREAT WHITE HUNTER) AND HIS NATIVE GUIDE AND PETITION THEIR RULER TO BEHEAD THE CAPTIVES.
YOU MUST DEFY THE JUNGLE LAW! WE OMGALI SHOULD NEVER HAVE AGREED TO ABANDON OUR WAYS FOR THE SOFTER LIFE YOU HAVE LED US TO!
KILL THEM!
OOOF!
SO, THE OMGALI ARE HEADHUNTING AGAIN? DEFYING JUNGLE LAW?
YOU SAW MY MARK, YET DARED TO CHALLENGE IT!

DOES ANYONE PLEAD FOR THE LIVES OF THESE LAW-BREAKERS?
THE PHANTOM, REALIZING POLITICS CAN BE JUST AS INTRICATE IN THE JUNGLE AS THEY ARE IN WASHINGTON, LONDON, MOSCOW OR BEIRUT, PROVIDES THE OMGALI RULER AN EASY WAY OUT.
BEG FOR THEIR LIVES.
GREAT PHANTOM, THESE MEN ARE YOUNG AND FOOLISH. PLEASE SPARE THEIR LIVES.
NO! THEY HAVE BROKEN THE JUNGLE LAW! THEY MUST DIE!
ASK ME AGAIN.
IF YOU SPARE THEM, NEVER AGAIN WILL WE RETURN TO HEADHUNTING!
YOU, AND ALL THE OMGALI PEOPLE, MUST GIVE YOUR SOLEMN OATH THAT YOU WILL NEVER RETURN TO HEADHUNTING.
WE SWEAR!
WE SWEAR!
WHO WAS THAT MAN?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT THIS MARK SURELY WORKS. HE TOLD ME IF WE EVER NEED HIM TO CALL HIS NAME AND HE'LL COME TO OUR AID.

MODERN DAY.
SO, I DON'T GET IT. WHAT MAKES THE ANGELA CARLYLE, HEIRESS TO THE CARLYLE FORTUNE, MONEY THAT EVERYONE KNOWS WAS MADE ON THE HUNTING AND EXPLOITATION OF ANIMALS, COME TO THE JUNGLE TO HELP NATIVE CHILDREN?
I ASK MYSELF THAT A LOT THESE DAYS, THERESA. I COULD BE HOME ENJOYING PILATES OR PREPARING FOR THE ROCK WALL CLIMBING COMPETITION AT MY COUNTRY CLUB.
BUT THOSE THINGS JUST AREN'T ENOUGH.
WHEN I LOOK BACK AT MY LIFE, SEEKING A PURPOSE, I THINK THE ONLY THING I LOVED MORE THAN ANIMALS AS A CHILD, WAS MY FATHER.
ONE DAY, AFTER HE RETURNED FROM SAFARI, I SAW ONE OF THE CATS HE'D CAPTURED. A JAGUAR. SHE WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING I'D EVER SEEN.
I KNEW I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO GO ANYWHERE NEAR HER CAGE, BUT I'D SNEAK DOWN THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
I'D FEED TIGGER SCRAPS FROM MY DINNER THAT I'D STASHED AWAY WHEN MY PARENTS WEREN'T LOOKING.
"TIGGER"? ISN'T THAT THE TIGER WITH THE SPRING-LOADED TALE FROM THOSE KID'S STORIES?
I WAS EIGHT AND NEVER VERY GOOD AT MAKE-BELIEVE. SO SUE ME.
SO, YOU CAN CERTAINLY IMAGINE I NEVER EXPECTED TO FIND TIGGER IN MY FATHER'S DEN.
I HAD NIGHTMARES FOR A LONG TIME AFTER THAT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I NEVER SET FOOT IN HIS DEN AGAIN.

ONCE I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO PROCESS WHAT WAS GOING ON, I REALIZED MY ENTIRE FAMILY FORTUNE WAS BASED ON ANIMAL EXPLOITATION. MY FAMILY HAD MADE A LIVING BY RAPING THIS LAND, ITS ANIMALS AND ITS PEOPLE.
I JUST COULDN'T LIVE WITH THAT.
SURE, I COULD HAVE GIVEN TO ONE OF THOSE CHARITIES YOU SEE ADVERTISING ON LATE NIGHT TV, BUT I NEEDED TO KNOW OUR MONEY WAS DOING MORE THAN LINING THE POCKETS OF CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS THAT SPEND MORE ON THEMSELVES THAN THE CAUSE.
OH-OH-MY YUNI!! HE HURT MY SON!
THERESA, GET HIM ON THE TABLE!
OH, MY GOD! WHO DID THIS?!
HIM.
HIS FATHER DID THIS?
NO, IT WAS HIM.
"HIM" WHO? ANOTHER MAN IN THE VILLAGE?
NO.
THE WARLORD HIM. HIM WAS SENT BY HIS GOD TO RULE ALL OF AFRICA. HIM'S ARMY GROWS MORE EVERY DAY WITH THE RANKS OF CHILDREN, TAKEN FROM THEIR HOMES IN THE DARKNESS.
THESE CHILDREN ARE INDOCTRINATED INTO HIS RELIGION. DISFIGURED AND FORCED TO COMMIT HEINOUS CRIMES SO THAT THEIR SHAME WILL PREVENT THEM FROM EVER RETURNING HOME.
YUNI WAS CAPTURED LAST NIGHT, BUT WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO ESCAPE BEFORE THEY TOOK HIM BACK ACROSS THE BORDER.

...AND I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN.
EVERYWHERE I TURNED I FOUND MOTHERS WHO HAD LOST CHILDREN TO THE NIGHT RAIDS OF HIM.
FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE, THE FACES CHANGE, BUT THE STORIES REMAIN THE SAME.
...NEVER SAW MY SON AGAIN.
...LEGEND TELLS US HIM IS GOD, COME TO TAKE BACK THIS WORLD FOR HIMSELF. CHILD BY CHILD HE WILL BUILD HIS KINGDOM, FORSAKING ALL THOSE WHO DEFY HIM.
AND I THOUGHT DAVID KORESH WAS A LUNATIC. THIS HIM CHARACTER IS TEN TIMES THE NUT JOB AND A HUNDRED TIMES MORE DANGEROUS.
HIM HAS TURNED UGANDA INTO HIS OWN KINGDOM AND NOW HIM SEEKS TO SPREAD HIS RELIGION TO ALL THE WORLD, WITH AN ARMY OF STOLEN CHILDREN AND HIS DIVINE RIGHT, HE COMES FOR US.
HE COMES FOR YOU, ARMORED BY THE ANCIENT LEGENDS MOLDED BY THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE TRIBES OF THE WASAKA.
HE CLAIMS TO BE AN ANCESTOR OF KUA, BORN OF CHRIST!
BUT YOU SHALL BE PROTECTED.
WHY WILL I BE PROTECTED?
BECAUSE YOU BEAR THE MARK OF THE GHOST.
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE! THAT'S WHY MY PARENTS HAD GIVEN ME THIS NECKLACE. THIS IS MY HIGHER CALLING.
NOW I KNOW WHAT MUST BE DONE...

MAWITAAN
FIRST I HAD TO BEGIN MY SEARCH FOR THIS LEGEND. I'D ALWAYS THOUGHT MY PARENTS TALKED ABOUT THE GHOST WHO WALKS TO KEEP ME FROM BEING SCARED OF THE DARK.
I CAN STILL HEAR MY MOTHER'S WORDS, "IF YOU EVER NEED HELP, SIMPLY SEEK OUT THE PHANTOM."
BAR

I KINDA FEEL FOOLISH LOOKING FOR A LEGEND IN A BAR, BUT I DON'T TRUST THE NATIVE GUIDES. THE ONLY WAY I'M GOING THAT DEEP IN THE JUNGLE IS WITH A CIVILIZED MAN.
OVER THERE. HIS NAME IS RANDAL. HE KNOWS THESE JUNGLES BETTER THAN ANYONE.

AND TO WHAT MIGHT I OWE THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY, LASS?
I NEED TO GO TO THE DEEP WOODS.

THE DEEP WOODS, EH? AND, PRAY TELL, WHY WOULD A PRETTY LITTLE THING SUCH AS YOURSELF WANT TO GO TO THAT DREADFUL PLACE?
I HAVE MY REASONS AND ENOUGH MONEY TO ENSURE YOU DON'T CARE WHAT THEY ARE.

WELL, SO MUCH FOR SMALL TALK. WE'LL LEAVE IN THE MORNING. I'LL MEET YOU OUT FRONT OF THIS FINE ESTABLISHMENT AT EIGHT.
BRING TWO THOUSAND AMERICAN DOLLARS OR DON'T BOTHER SHOWING UP.

NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I WAS HAVING A DISCUSSION WITH MY GOOD FRIEND JOHNNIE.

I'VE NEVER BEEN VERY GOOD AT JUDGING THE CHARACTER OF MEN, BUT THIS GUY SEEMS INTERESTED IN MONEY AND IF HE DOESN'T GET ME WHERE I WANT TO GO, HE WON'T GET ANY.

BAR
GOOD JOB, KATE. SHE'S EXACTLY WHAT WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.

WE'VE BEEN WALKING FOR DAYS AFTER ENTERING THE JUNGLE. I HAVE NO IDEA HOW FAR THESE DEEP WOODS ARE, BUT MOTHER HAD TOLD ME IT WAS "QUITE THE HIKE".
HOW MUCH FARTHER ARE THE DEEP WOODS, RANDAL?
OUR JOURNEY IS ALMOST OVER, MY DEAR.
GOOD, MY FEET ARE KILLING ME.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WH-WHAT IS THIS?
THIS, MY DEAR, IS A BUSINESS TRANSACTION.
OH, YOU'VE OUTDONE YOURSELF THIS TIME, RANDAL. SHE'S EXACTLY WHAT HIM WANTS.
DON'T TOUCH ME!
AND FIERY, TOO. HE'LL BE VERY PLEASED
MANAGO, LOCK HER UP WITH THE OTHERS.

GET OVER HERE!
LET GO!
OPEN IT
GET OFF OF--
--ME
NO!
YOU CAN'T ESCA--
THE MARK! BOSS!
SHE WEARS THE MARK!
RANDAL! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!

...
YOU BLITHERING IMBECILE! YOU'LL RUIN EVERYTHING! DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG WE'VE MANAGED TO OPERATE WITHOUT DRAWING ATTENTION TO OURSELVES?
HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW SHE HAD THE MARK? YOU THINK EVERY BLOODY TROLLOP THAT WALTZES INTO MAWITAAN HAS ONE OR SOMETHING?
THIS IS THE LAST MISTAKE YOU COULD AFFORD TO MAKE, RANDAL.
GET BACK! WE CAN WORK THIS OUT.
I BARELY HEARD THE GUNSHOT OVER THE POUNDING OF MY HEART, WHICH ODDLY ENOUGH SOUNDS LIKE THE POUNDING OF JUNGLE DRUMS.
I MUST BE LOSING MY MIND!
I'VE BEEN RUNNING ALL NIGHT, BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY SIGNS OF PURSUIT IN HOURS. I NEED TO REST...HAVE TO FIND A CLEARING.

DID I JUST STEP BACK IN TIME? AT LEAST NO ONE IS POINTING A RIFLE AT ME, BUT IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I'VE IMPROVED MY COMPANIONSHIP MUCH.
YAMAMA OU RANDA! YAMAMA OU RANDA!
KELLEL! OU GETTI!
GETTI!
OH, CRAP!
NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY SO MANY PEOPLE GIVE MONEY TO THOSE LATE NIGHT TV CHARITIES INSTEAD OF COMING HERE IN PERSON...
WHAT WAS IT MOM ALWAYS SAID? OH YEAH, "IF YOU EVER NEED THE PHANTOM, SIMPLY CALL FOR HIM."
GETTI! GETTI!

PHAAANNNTOOOMMM!
OUGALLA ONNANAH! OUGALLA ONNANAH!
ECHY BULLIE LOU LO!
HIGHER GROUND. IF I COULD ONLY FIND HIGHER GROUND, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO SEE A WAY OUT OF THIS...
TOO BAD I SPENT SO MUCH TIME ROCK CLIMBING WHEN I SHOULD HAVE BEEN SPRINTING!
THIS WAS NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND!

WELL, I AM THE SOMERSET COUNTRY CLUB ROCK CLIMBING CHAMPION. AND ALL THIS TIME I THOUGHT THAT WOULD NEVER COME IN HANDY IN THE REAL WORLD.
MOK!
APPARENTLY, I WON BECAUSE THESE GUYS DIDN'T ENTER...

GETTI!
A LEDGE! MAYBE THERE'S A PLACE I CAN HIDE, OR AT LEAST *FORCE THEM* TO COME AT ME ONE AT A TIME.
OU GETTI! OU GETTI!
NO PLACE TO RUN. SO MUCH FOR HIGHER GROUND.
WELL, THEY AREN'T GETTING *ME* WITHOUT A *FIGHT*.
...
OU. GETTI!

NEED A LIFT?
Y-Y-YOU'RE HIM! YOU'RE THE PHANTOM.
AS LEGEND WOULD HAVE IT.

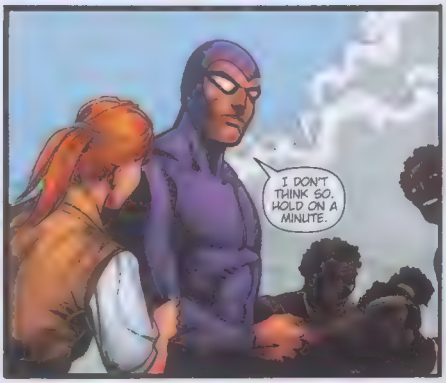
QUITE THE FAN CLUB YOU HAVE HERE.
CRAAACK
THEY REALLY SEEM QUITE FOND OF YOU.
OOOOOF!
WHAM
OU GETTI NO BALA!, NO BALA KALANDA!
WHAT?
SAY THAT AGAIN.

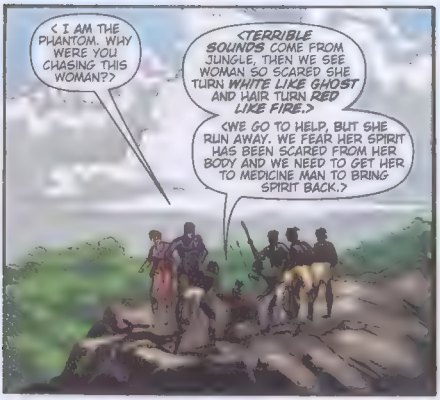
OU GETTI NO BALA!, NO BALA KALANDA!
NO BANA KANANDA?
NO BALA KALANDA. OU GETTI PROTET!.
"PROTET!"?

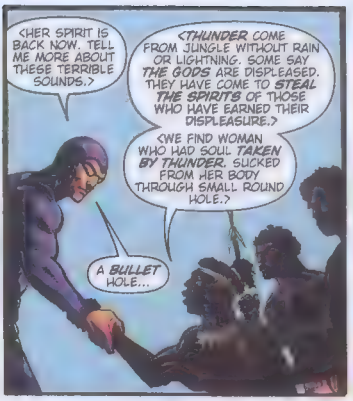
YOU UNDERSTAND THEM?
MOSTLY. THEY'RE SPEAKING AN ODD DIALECT THAT SEEMS TO HAVE THE SAME ROOT LANGUAGE AS THE BANDAR.

WELL, WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?
IT SEEMS THEY'RE TRYING TO PROTECT YOU.

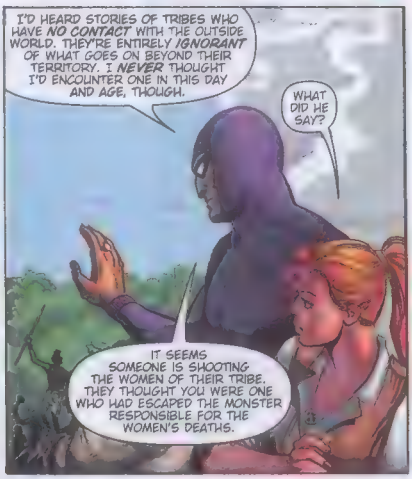
"PROTECT ME"? THEY WERE TRYING TO KILL ME!


I DON'T THINK SO. HOLD ON A MINUTE.


< I AM THE PHANTOM. WHY WERE YOU CHASING THIS WOMAN?>
<TERRIBLE SOUNDS COME FROM JUNGLE, THEN WE SEE WOMAN SO SCARED SHE TURN WHITE LIKE GHOST AND HAIR TURN RED LIKE FIRE.>
<WE GO TO HELP, BUT SHE RUN AWAY. WE FEAR HER SPIRIT HAS BEEN SCARED FROM HER BODY AND WE NEED TO GET HER TO MEDICINE MAN TO BRING SPIRIT BACK.>


<HER SPIRIT IS BACK NOW. TELL ME MORE ABOUT THESE TERRIBLE SOUNDS.>
<THUNDER COME FROM JUNGLE WITHOUT RAIN OR LIGHTNING. SOME SAY THE GODS ARE DISPLEASED. THEY HAVE COME TO STEAL THE SPIRITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE EARNED THEIR DISPLEASURE.>
<WE FIND WOMAN WHO HAD SOUL TAKEN BY THUNDER. SUCKED FROM HER BODY THROUGH SMALL ROUND HOLE.>
A BULLET HOLE...

<I WILL CARE FOR THIS WOMAN AND SEE THAT NO ONE STEALS HER SOUL. THEN I WILL FIND THE ONE WHO ANGERED YOUR GODS AND MAKE SURE THAT ANGER IS APPEASED.>
<THANK YOU, PHANTOM. WE GO NOW AND WILL PRAY THAT YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL IN APPEASING THE GODS.>


I'D HEARD STORIES OF TRIBES WHO HAVE NO CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. THEY'RE ENTIRELY IGNORANT OF WHAT GOES ON BEYOND THEIR TERRITORY. I NEVER THOUGHT I'D ENCOUNTER ONE IN THIS DAY AND AGE, THOUGH.
WHAT DID HE SAY?
IT SEEMS SOMEONE IS SHOOTING THE WOMEN OF THEIR TRIBE. THEY THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE WHO HAD ESCAPED THE MONSTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WOMEN'S DEATHS.

THEY WEREN'T OUT TO GET YOU, THEY WANTED TO PROTECT YOU AND PUT YOUR SPIRIT BACK IN YOUR BODY.
MY SPIRIT? WHAT?

SO, THEY WERE TRYING TO PROTECT ME ALL ALONG. I'M *SUCH* AN IDIOT.
YOU'LL *OFTEN FIND* THAT THINGS ARE *NOT* AS THEY APPEAR IN THE JUNGLE.

AND THAT COUNTS FOR THE CIVILIZED JUNGLE AS WELL.
THAT IT DOES. SO, TELL ME, WHAT BRINGS YOU OUT HERE? AND WHERE DID YOU GET THAT NECKLACE?

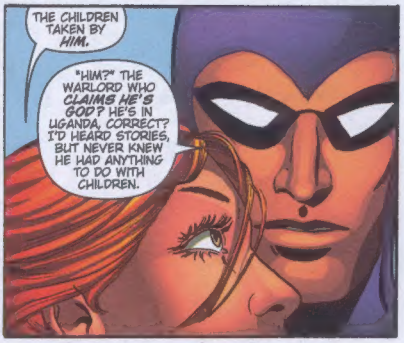
I'M ANGELA CARLYLE. MY FATHER, TONY CARLYLE, GAVE ME THIS.
HE TOLD ME IF I WAS EVER IN TROUBLE TO *SEEK YOU OUT.*

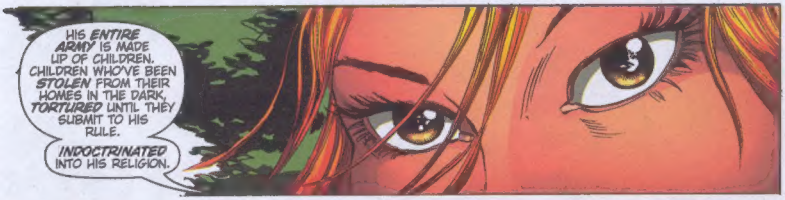
WELL, NOW THAT YOU'RE *NO LONGER IN TROUBLE,* WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TAKE YOU?

I WAS NEVER THE ONE IN *TROUBLE.*
HAHA!
WELL, THEN, YOU FOOLED ME PRETTY GOOD BACK ON THAT CLIFF.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
WELL, WHAT DID YOU MEAN, THEN?

I CAME TO SEEK YOUR HELP. FOR THE CHILDREN.
WHAT CHILDREN?


THE CHILDREN TAKEN BY HIM.
"HIM?" THE WARLORD WHO CLAIMS HE'S GOD? HE'S IN UGANDA, CORRECT? I'D HEARD STORIES, BUT NEVER KNEW HE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH CHILDREN.


HIS ENTIRE ARMY IS MADE UP OF CHILDREN. CHILDREN WHO'VE BEEN STOLEN FROM THEIR HOMES IN THE DARK, TORTURED UNTIL THEY SUBMIT TO HIS RULE.
INDOCTRINATED INTO HIS RELIGION.

AND YOU SAID YOU RAN INTO SOME SLAVERS BACK THERE AS WELL?
YES. DO YOU THINK THEY'RE CONNECTED?

THEIR CRUEL THOUGHTS AND BRUTAL HEARTS CONNECT ALL EVIL MEN.

THESE BANDAR WILL TAKE YOU BACK TO MAWITAAN, ANGELA CARLYLE. THEY'LL SEE THAT YOU FIND SAFE PASSAGE BACK TO THE UNITED STATES.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN? WHAT ABOUT THE WARLORD?
LEAVE HIM TO ME.
BEGINNING NEXT ISSUE: THE GHOST WHO WALKS GOES TO WAR!

BEHIND THE MASK

The Goodmark
By *Ed Rhoades*

Criminals were marked for life by the Phantom's skull ring. But his other mark means something entirely different. On the left hand "closer to the heart" the Phantom wears a ring with a symbol signifying that "He who bears this mark will always be protected by the Phantom."

The goodmark ring was introduced in May 1958 and was drawn by the late Wilson McCoy. Its appearance can be likened to an X with four sword handles. This meant that the imprint caused by the ring was identical to the ring.

However, when legendary artist Sy Barry drew the ring and symbol, it changed. From then on, the 'handles' became wider each indicating the letter "P" for protection. Also, to maintain the symbol consistent with the letter "P" each handle had to face the same direction. This caused a minor contradiction in that the impression from the ring technically would no longer be a mirror of the ring.

For aesthetic reasons, the ring was still depicted as the positive image in the Paramount film, the newspaper strips, and in all but one Marvel comic series. At a chalk talk, Sy Barry mentioned the discrepancy saying now for demonstrations, he draws the ring as a negative of the image it makes.

Besides, being a small mark on the wrist of a male who bears the symbol, the goodmark sign appears in other forms like a sign posted at Dr. Axle's jungle hospital. Women with the goodmark sign wear it as jewelry such as earrings or pendants. Lee's daughters Diane and Valerie each have a pendent goodmark produced by Egmont, the Scandinavian Fantomen publisher.

There have been a few instances of the goodmark available for US Phantom fans. At the Paramount screening of the film, there were large chunky style rings with both the skull and goodmark. A company called Planet Studios put out silver versions of each ring and black and white cloisonné style pins. I had the privilege of wearing the Planet Studios rings during the close-up for the A&E Phantom Biography.

At the premiere for the Paramount film, Lee Falk was presented with elegant gold rings one engraved with a skull, the other a goodmark.

As a tribute to Phantom history, this current Moonstone story actually depicts both the early McCoy and later Barry versions of the ring.